

Countywide Community Forums

Round #2

Citizen Priorities for County Government: Budget and Strategic Options

OPINIONNAIRE®

Answer Column

Dear *Citizen Councilor* of King County,

Thank you for sharing your opinions! By answering this anonymous survey you communicate your specific opinions to the top elected officials of King County, your fellow *Citizen Councilors*, and the general public.

There are three kinds of questions.

The **Demographic Questions** ask general questions about you. These questions help us better understand how different categories of participants feel about different issues.

The **Topic Questions** are next. They make up most of this survey.

The **Process Questions** are last. Your answers to these questions will help select the topic for future rounds of the *Countywide Community Forums*, and help us improve the process.

Please circle your answer to each question twice: once in the main body of the *Opinionnaire*® and once again in the ANSWER COLUMN on the right side of each page. After you're done, please separate the ANSWER COLUMN from the *Opinionnaire*® by carefully folding and then separating it along the vertical perforation line. If you need help with this, please ask your host. Your host will return all of the ANSWER COLUMNS to us for tabulation.

After separating the ANSWER COLUMN and giving it to your host, you are welcome to take the *Opinionnaire*® home with you. If you save it, you will be able to compare your answers with the answers given by other *Citizen Councilors* when all of the *Opinionnaires*® from all of the small groups have been tabulated and posted on the internet.

Thanks again for sharing your opinions as an official *Citizen Councilor*!

-- *The Countywide Community Forums* team

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS & CONCEPTS

King County General Fund Budget

The General Fund represents only about 13% of King County's total operating and capital budget, or about \$628 million out of a \$4.9 billion budget. Over 70% of the General Fund expenditures are for law, safety and justice programs. This includes the sheriff, district and superior courts, the prosecutor and public defender, and adult and juvenile detention (jails). The second largest allocation is for general government operations, such as elections and licensing services, county assessor, facilities and government administration. Finally, health and human services program comprise 6% of General Fund expenditures. General Fund revenues come from two primary sources: the property tax, which equals roughly 44% of General Fund revenues; and the sales tax, which makes up about 15% of General Fund revenues. The other 41% of the county's revenues come from a variety of sources, including contracts, fees for service, fines and forfeits, and interest earnings.

Non-General Funds, which include enterprise funds (e.g. Wastewater Treatment); Special Revenue Funds (e.g. Roads); Internal Service Funds (e.g. payroll services); and Capital Funds (e.g. new park facilities) make up the remaining 87% of the King County budget. By state law non-General Funds may not be used to support General Fund activities.

Dedicated funds

More than 80% of the County budget is by law dedicated to specific programs. These "dedicated funds" cannot be used for any other purpose; bus fares can only be used to help pay for transit, sewer fees can only be used to pay for wastewater treatment.

Unincorporated King County

An unincorporated area is an area that is not part of any municipality. Unincorporated areas in King County are served by county government. Eighty-two percent, or 1,755 square miles, of the land area of the county is unincorporated, but less than 20% of King County's population lives in unincorporated areas and most of the unincorporated population, about 220,000 people, live in ten urban areas of western King County for which the county provides urban-level services, such as police protection, local parks and street maintenance. Rural areas, which by law cannot be annexed into a city, cover the majority of King County's land area but contain less than one-tenth of the County's population.

Annexation/Incorporation

Annexation is the process by which an area becomes part of a city. Incorporation is the process of creating a new city. State law gives cities and residents of unincorporated areas control over annexation and incorporation decisions. Both processes can be initiated by either the city or residents. The same reasons that make the remaining urban unincorporated areas expensive for King County makes them expensive for a city to serve. The urbanized unincorporated areas are mostly low-density single-family areas with no large commercial tax base.

Lifeboat Strategy

Given the severity of the financial challenges it faces, King County faces the prospect of not being able to continue to sustain all of its existing programs and services. The 2009 Budget identifies the reduction or elimination of certain programs that directly impact human services and public health, as well as public safety in King County. For the first six months of 2009, these programs will be supported while the county works with the Washington State Legislature during the 2009 legislative session to craft a solution that would provide King County with the flexibility and revenue options required to sustain these services over the long term. Funding for these programs expires on June 30, 2009 unless King County secures sufficient flexibility and revenue tools from the state legislature to sustain them.

Rainy Day Fund/Budget Reserve

The 2008 budget created a permanent reserve with the transfer of a \$15 million existing reserve into a fund that insulates essential county services from the effect of catastrophic loss or a severe downturn in the local economy. The 2009 budget calls for a larger counter-cyclical reserve into which contributions can be made when revenues are robust and from which moneys could be drawn to protect services during periods of economic decline.

Property Tax

The property tax is a tax assessed in proportion to the value of the appraised value of the land and its immovable improvements, such as buildings. While the check for King County residents is paid to "King County," only about 15 cents or 1/6th of every property tax dollar goes to the County government. The County only collects the money as a service of the County Treasury. The greater portion is disbursed to schools (52%), city and local services, including unincorporated roads, fire, libraries, parks and hospital districts (31%), and Port (2%).

Sales Tax

The current general sales tax rate in most of King County is 9.0% (9.5% in bars and restaurants). Of the 9% general sales tax currently collected on most taxable sales in King County, 6.5% goes to the state, 0.9% is dedicated to Metro Transit, 0.4% goes to Sound Transit, 0.1% is dedicated to criminal justice programs and is divided between King County and the cities, and 0.1% goes to King County for Mental Health and Drug Dependency. Counties receive the full 1% of sales taxes collected in unincorporated areas, but also 15% of the 1% tax collected within city limits. The additional 0.5% tax in bars and restaurants goes to King County for debt service on bonds issued to finance the construction of Safeco Field. The general tax rate will soon rise to 9.5% (10.0% in bars and restaurants) as a result of voter approval for the expansion of Sound Transit in November 2008.

Utility tax

The occupational utility tax is paid by persons (including governments), engaged in or carrying on a telephone business, drainage and wastewater system, or cable television system; the business of selling, brokering, or furnishing gas, water, electricity, or steam heat; or the business of collecting solid waste. King County currently does not have the ability to impose utility taxes in unincorporated areas.

Business and Occupation Tax

The Business and Occupation (B&O) Tax is a type of tax levied by the State of Washington that is levied on gross business income. Different types of businesses are taxed at different rates, depending upon their classification. Cities also levy different types of taxes and fees on businesses based on gross income by classification, square footage used to conduct business activities, admission to events for entertainment or recreation, etc. State law does not allow counties to levy similar taxes on businesses.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

(D-1) Over your lifetime, how long have you **lived or worked in King County?**

(1) 1 2 3 4 5

1. I have never lived or worked in King County.
2. Less than 5 years
3. 5-9 years
4. 10-19 years
5. 20 years or more

(D-2) What is your **Gender?**

(2) 1 2

1. Male
2. Female

(D-3) What is **your Age Range?**

(3) 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8

1. 10-19 years
2. 20-29 years
3. 30-39 years
4. 40-49 years
5. 50-59 years
6. 60-69 years
7. 70-79 years
8. 80 years or older

(D-4) What is your primary **Racial or Ethnic Heritage?**

(4) 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8

1. American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)
2. Asian (non-Hispanic)
3. Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
4. Hispanic or Latino/Latina
5. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)
6. White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
7. Blended Racial Heritage (non-Hispanic)
8. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

(D-5) What is your primary **Employment Status?**

(5) 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10

1. Self-Employed or Business Owner
2. Work for any For-Profit Business
3. Work for any Non-Profit Organization
4. Work for any City Government
5. Work for any County Government
6. Work for WA State, Federal or Tribal Government
7. Work for any Educational Institution
8. Student
9. Unemployed and seeking work
10. Homemaker, Volunteer, Retired, Disabled or otherwise not employed

(D-6) What is the highest level of **Education** you have completed?

1. Grades 1-8
2. Some High School
3. High School Graduate (including GED)
4. Some College or Technical School
5. Technical School Graduate or Two-year College Graduate
6. Four-year College Graduate
7. Some Post-Graduate Education
8. Post Graduate Degree (Masters, Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.)

(6) 1 2 3 4 5
 6 7 8

(D-7) What is your primary **Household Family** Description?

1. Single Parent with children
2. Dual Parent with children
3. Extended Family sharing one home
4. Single-person household
5. Living with a Roommate or Roommates
6. Living with a Spouse or Companion
7. Homeless with or without children or other family
8. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

(7) 1 2 3 4 5
 6 7 8

(D-8) Did you vote in the most recent Presidential election?

1. No. I am not eligible to vote.
2. No. However, I just became eligible and plan to vote in the future.
3. No. However, I'm eligible and could have voted if I wanted to.
4. Yes. I have voted in all elections since becoming eligible, with very few exceptions.
5. Yes. I have voted in at least half of the elections since becoming eligible.
6. Yes. However, I have voted in less than half of the elections since becoming eligible to vote.
7. Yes. However, it was exceptional for me to vote and I have rarely or never done so since becoming eligible to vote.
8. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

(8) 1 2 3 4 5
 6 7 8

(D-9) Have you engaged in any of the following forms of community involvement over the last 12 months: (a) volunteering, (b) contacting an elected official, or (c) attending a neighborhood meeting?

1. Yes, all three.
2. Yes, two of the three.
3. Yes, one of the three.
4. No.
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

(9) 1 2 3 4 5

(D-10) How **informed** are you about the general topic of "Budget Priorities & Strategic Options for King County?"

(10) 1 2 3 4 5

1. Very well informed
2. Somewhat well informed
3. Informed
4. Somewhat uninformed
5. Not informed at all

(D-11) If you live in King County, **who is your King County Councilmember?** (Your host has a map showing the nine council districts for your reference. It's also on your voter registration card)

(11) 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10

1. Bob Ferguson (district #1)
2. Larry Gossett (district #2)
3. Kathy Lambert (district #3)
4. Larry Phillips (district #4)
5. Julia Patterson (district #5)
6. Jane Hague (district #6)
7. Pete von Reichbauer (district #7)
8. Dow Constantine (district #8)
9. Reagan Dunn (district #9)
10. I work in King County but live elsewhere

(D-12 & 13): Please indicate whether you live in unincorporated King County, or in one of King County's 39 cities (if you live outside of King County, but work in King County, please leave the question blank)

(12 & 13) ☐

Unincorporated King County (00)	Lake Forest Park (20)
Algona (01)	Maple Valley (21)
Auburn (02)	Medina (22)
Beaux Arts Village (03)	Mercer Island (23)
Bellevue (04)	Milton (24)
Black Diamond (05)	Newcastle (25)
Bothell (06)	Normandy Park (26)
Burien (07)	North Bend (27)
Carnation (08)	Pacific (28)
Clyde Hill (09)	Redmond (29)
Covington (10)	Renton (30)
Des Moines (11)	Sammamish (31)
Duvall (12)	SeaTac (32)
Enumclaw (13)	Seattle (33)
Federal Way (14)	Shoreline (34)
Hunts Point (15)	Skykomish (35)
Issaquah (16)	Snoqualmie (36)
Kenmore (17)	Tukwila (37)
Kent (18)	Woodinville (38)
Kirkland (19)	Yarrow Point (39)

(D-14 & 15) Please indicate the state legislative district in King County where you live (Your host has a map showing the various state legislative districts for your reference. It's also on your voter registration card)

(14 & 15)

I don't live in King County ...	(00)	Legislative District 36	(36)
Legislative District 1	(01)	Legislative District 37	(37)
Legislative District 5	(05)	Legislative District 39	(39)
Legislative District 11.....	(11)	Legislative District 41	(41)
Legislative District 30.....	(30)	Legislative District 43	(43)
Legislative District 31.....	(31)	Legislative District 45	(45)
Legislative District 32.....	(32)	Legislative District 46	(46)
Legislative District 33.....	(33)	Legislative District 47	(47)
Legislative District 34.....	(34)	Legislative District 48	(48)

(D-16, 17 & 18) Please indicate your **Organizational Affiliation** by entering a 3-digit organization code in the Answer Column. **If you are participating strictly as an individual *Citizen Councilor*, please enter "000".** However, if you are a member of one of the organizations below and want your opinions to be included in that group's sub-report, please enter that group's 3-digit code in the Answer Column. If you are a member of more than one organization below, please choose only one organization and enter its code in the Answer Column.

(16-18)

No Affiliation	(000)
Bellevue Overlake/Sunrise Rotary Clubs	(001)
Pacific Northwest Mensa	(002)
Family Support Network	(003)
World Affairs Council, Seattle Chapter	(004)
The King County Sheriff's Office	(006)
The Center for Wise Democracy	(007)
The Greater Maple Valley Area	(008)
The Wallingford Boys & Girls Club	(045)
The 48th District Republicans	(048)
The Vashon-Maury Island Community	(070)
WOW (Women of Washington)	(111)
The Urban Wilderness Project	(118)
The King County Libraries	(123)
The Wallingford Community Senior Center	(140)
The Sierra Club, Cascade Chapter	(180)
The Church Council of Greater Seattle	(200)
The United Methodist Church, Seattle District	(205)
The Seattle Public Libraries	(321)
KVI Radio (AM 570) Kirby Wilbur Show Listener	(570)
KIRO Radio (AM 710) Dave Ross Show Listener	(710)

TOPIC QUESTIONS

For each of these topic questions, please indicate your **ONE BEST CHOICE** in the ANSWER COLUMN on the right side of this page.

Choose **ABSTAIN** if you don't feel you have enough information at this time to select one of the other choices.

Choose **OBJECT** if you feel the question is poorly written or misleading.

If you choose "other" please "write in" your particular answer in the ANSWER COLUMN.

Strategic considerations for the King County region

(T-1 through T-14) *What is your opinion about the current level of expenditure by King County and/or the different layers of government in our region on the following list of issues?* The current economic situation will require all government-provided services to be reviewed. If you feel that some programs should be funded at a higher level, also consider which programs might need to be funded at a lower level. If you are satisfied with the current of level of services, then consider the spending to be about right. If you consider a program to be excellent but not receiving enough attention, then indicate that more money should be spent. If you consider that too much is being done already or that the program has no value, then indicate that less money should be spent.

Spend a lot MORE money 1 2 3 4 5 Spend a lot LESS money

[NOTE: These are "end anchor" *questions*. Please choose "1" for "spend a lot MORE money", **choose "3" for "current spending is about right"**, choose "5" for "spend a lot LESS money", and choose 2 or 4 for something in between.]

(T-1) Economic development

(1) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

(T-2) Infrastructure maintenance
(roads, bridges, sewer, utility grid, etc.)

(2) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

Citizen Priorities for County Government: Budget & Strategic Options

Answer Column				
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(T-3) New roads	(3) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-4) Public transportation	(4) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-5) Resource and energy conservation (green building, recycling, alternative energy, etc.)	(5) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-6) Arts and historic preservation	(6) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-7) Crime prevention (block watch, Community Service Officers, anti-bullying training, etc.)	(7) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-8) Law enforcement (incident response, patrol presence, detectives, etc.)	(8) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-9) Social safety net (food banks, emergency care, programs for the elderly)	(9) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-10) Health and wellness (nutrition, overweight prevention, walkability index, etc.)	(10) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-11) Public health clinics and services (immunization, disease treatment)	(11) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-12) Disaster preparedness	(12) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-13) Preservation of agricultural areas or environmentally sensitive areas	(13) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object
(T-14) Pollution prevention and environmental quality (water quality, wastewater treatment, flood control, air quality, etc.)	(14) 1 2 3 4 5 Abstain Object

Public Safety

(T-15) The King County Sheriff's Office serves the law enforcement needs of over half a million people in unincorporated areas and twelve contract cities, in addition to providing police departments for the Muckleshoot Tribe, Metro Transit, and the King County International Airport and some regional services to all residents of King County. When all goes well, people feel safe in their communities. *Please rate how safe you feel in your community today.*

(15) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

Very safe 1 2 3 4 5 Very unsafe

Abstain Object

(T-16) *Are you feeling safer living or working today in King County than five years ago?* Please "abstain" if you haven't lived or worked in King County for at least five years.

(16) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

Much safer today 1 2 3 4 5 Much less safe today

Abstain Object

(T-17) While Sheriff Rahr argues in the video that having a centralized regional criminal justice system would promote efficiency and potentially save money, local governments and some citizens might prefer having local control over their police, courts, and jails. *In your opinion, should we move toward more regional (countywide) services or more local (city) control of the criminal justice system?*

(17) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

More Regional Services 1 2 3 4 5 More Local Services

Abstain Object

(T-18) Through its Sheriff's Office, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, District Court and Superior Court, Office of the Public Defender, Department of Community and Human Services and King County jails, the county provides a host of mandated and discretionary public safety services. Those services include criminal and administrative justice and law enforcement, but also victim assistance and advocacy, public education and crime prevention programs. *In your opinion, how adequate is the level of public safety services offered today in King County compared to the needs of the community?*

(18) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

Very adequate 1 2 3 4 5 Very inadequate

Abstain Object

Health & Human Services

(T-19) King County delivers a host of health and human services to the public either directly or by funding service delivery organizations. Those services are wide ranging and far reaching and include disease prevention, crisis clinics, children's healthcare, services for special need populations, family planning and senior services. Most of those services are discretionary (not mandated by law to be offered at the county level), yet many people believe they contribute widely to the health of the community. *In your opinion, how adequate is the level of health and human services offered today in King County compared to the needs of the community?*

Very adequate 1 2 3 4 5 Very inadequate

Abstain Object

(19) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(T-20) *Should there be a "secure, stable and adequate" funding source for health and human services in King County?* Please choose the answer that best represents your opinion.

1. Yes. King County should ask voters to consider a special property tax levy for that purpose, in the same way that voters approved a special property tax levy to support King County Parks.
2. Yes. King County should ask the State Legislature to allow King County voters to consider a special sales tax levy for that purpose.
3. Yes. King County should divert a specific percentage of existing taxes for this purpose even though that would lower services in other areas.
4. Yes. King County should ask the legislature to allow voters to consider other taxes - not sales or property taxes.
5. No. Providing health and human services is not a core function of King County. Those services should be funded by state, federal and/or charitable agencies, even if this results in a lower level of services.

Abstain Object

(20) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

Lifeboat Strategy

(T-21) The 2009 King County General Fund Budget used a “lifeboat” strategy to keep some discretionary programs mostly in health and human services but also in criminal justice funded through June 2009. Examples of programs in the “lifeboat” include substance abuse program, childcare health, sexually transmitted diseases program, family planning services, drinking water program, and a variety of state mandated services. Those programs would otherwise have been fully or partially cut immediately. This is intended to create pressure on the state Legislature to either take over some of those programs or give King County more taxing authority and/or spending flexibility so that the “lifeboat” programs can continue and receive funding in 2010 and 2011. *How much will you be impacted personally if funding is not found to pay for the programs currently in the “Lifeboat”?*

Big Personal Impact 1 2 3 4 5 No Personal Impact

Abstain Object

(21) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

Budgeting Process, Annexation & Taxes

(T-22) *What do you believe is the **single** biggest problem with King County’s current budget situation with respect to the General Fund?*

1. Growth in countywide property taxes is limited to 1%/year (not including taxes on new construction).
2. Unlike cities, King County is not allowed to levy “Business & Occupation” taxes and utility taxes on residents of unincorporated areas.
3. The County’s “rainy day” reserve is too small.
4. The County’s expenditures are growing faster than its revenues.
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(22) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC QUESTIONS 23-25: Several different alternatives have been suggested as ways to attempt to balance King County's budget by increasing revenues, reducing expenses or avoiding large budget shortfalls. Please rank your top three priorities by answering the following three questions. Note that those options may require approval from the state Legislature and/or a majority vote by the citizens of King County.

(T-23) Please indicate your #1 priority here:

1. During good economic times, increasing the "rainy day" reserve from \$15 million to at least \$50 million.
2. Raising the current limit on the growth of countywide property taxes from 1% to 3% or the average level of inflation.
3. Giving the County the same taxing authority over residents of unincorporated areas that the 39 cities in King County have over city residents (i.e., the authority to levy utility taxes and "Business & Occupation" taxes).
4. Adopting a strict limit on the growth of overall County spending (such as the rate of inflation in the previous year, plus or minus x%), even if it reduces or limits core county services.
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(23) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(T-24) Please indicate your #2 priority here:

1. During good economic times, increasing the "rainy day" reserve from \$15 million to at least \$50 million.
2. Raising the current limit on the growth of countywide property taxes from 1% to 3% or the average level of inflation.
3. Giving the County the same taxing authority over residents of unincorporated areas that the 39 cities in King County have over city residents (i.e., the authority to levy utility taxes and "Business & Occupation" taxes).
4. Adopting a strict limit on the growth of overall County spending (such as the rate of inflation in the previous year, plus or minus x%), even if it reduces or limits core county services.
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(24) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(T-25) Please indicate your #3 priority here:

1. During good economic times, increasing the "rainy day" reserve from \$15 million to at least \$50 million.
2. Raising the current limit on the growth of countywide property taxes from 1% to 3% or the average level of inflation.
3. Giving the County the same taxing authority over residents of unincorporated areas that the 39 cities in King County have over city residents (i.e., the authority to levy utility taxes and "Business & Occupation" taxes).
4. Adopting a strict limit on the growth of overall County spending (such as the rate of inflation in the previous year, plus or minus x%), even if it reduces or limits core county services.
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(25) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(T-26) Should the state Legislature authorize King County to raise more local taxes (such as authorizing the county to increase its overall property tax revenues by more than 1% annually, and/or levy utility taxes and/or "Business & Occupation" taxes in unincorporated areas) to help King County avoid further cuts in services?

1. Yes
2. No

Abstain Object

(26) 1 2

Abstain Object

(T-27) Should the state Legislature give King County more flexibility in how it uses its existing local taxes (such as authorizing the county to use its existing "health & human services" levy to fund existing programs rather than just expand existing programs) to help King County avoid further cuts in services?

1. Yes
2. No

Abstain Object

(27) 1 2

Abstain Object

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Answer Column

(T-28) Which **ONE** of these things do you think will have the greatest impact on increasing efficiencies in King County government?

(28) 1 2 3 4 5

1. More performance audits of existing programs to uncover problems or inefficiencies.
2. More public-private partnerships and/or privatization of County programs.
3. More measurable objectives for specific programs to promote accountability and better management.
4. Look for ways to consolidate or combine programs or functions.
5. Other (please specify in the Answer Column).

Abstain Object

Abstain Object

(T-29) State law authorizes local government to charge up to 1% sales tax for general purposes. Counties receive the full 1% of sales taxes collected in unincorporated areas, but also 15% of the 1% tax collected within city limits in recognition of the fact that most residents of the unincorporated areas spend their money in cities (where almost all of the shopping malls, car dealers and “big box” retailers are located). According to the Washington Research Council, King County, with the combination of sales taxes in unincorporated areas and its 15% share of the cities’ sales tax, collects about \$220 per resident while the average of all King County cities is \$250 per resident. Cities range from a high of \$475 per resident (Issaquah), to a low of \$65 per resident (Sammamish).

(29) 1 2 3 4

Abstain Object

What portion of the local sales tax collected by cities should the County get?

1. The County should get more than 15% of the city’s portion.
2. 15% of the city’s portion for the County is about right.
3. The County should get less than 15% of the city’s portion.
4. Other (please specify in the Answer Column).

Abstain Object

(T-30) Some County services (such as County Parks, Metro Transit and Emergency Medical Services) are funded with dedicated property tax or sales tax levies. *Should more county services be provided with dedicated property tax or sales tax levies?*

(30) 1 2

Abstain Object

1. Yes
2. No

Abstain Object

(T-31) There are currently about ten “urbanized” areas of King County that have not been annexed by a nearby city because of concerns that extending city services to these areas could cost more than the taxes the new city residents would pay. As a result, King County is providing services to about 220,000 people who do not generate sufficient revenues to cover urban-level services. *Should cities be required to annex adjacent “urbanized” areas so that the County can focus its efforts on regional issues rather than providing local services to unincorporated areas?*

(31)	1	2
	Abstain	Object

1. Yes
2. No

Abstain Object

(T-32) Most of the 1.8 million people in King County live in one of its 39 cities (the “incorporated” areas) but approximately 400,000 people live outside of the cities in the “unincorporated” part of King County. Although these 400,000 people do pay a special property tax levy for road services, they do not pay any utility taxes or “Business & Occupation” taxes because, unlike cities, the County is not authorized by the Legislature to levy these taxes. *Should the County have the same power to levy the same taxes on residents of the “unincorporated” areas of the county that cities have in the “incorporated” areas?*

(32)	1	2
	Abstain	Object

1. Yes
2. No

Abstain Object

(T-33) In the most recent budget, the King County Council identified “Public Safety, Public Health and Quality of Life” as its most important priorities. *How well do you think the 2009 budget adopted by the County supports these priorities?*

(33)	1	2	3	4	5
	Abstain			Object	

Supports very well 1 2 3 4 5 Doesn't support at all

Abstain Object

[NOTE: This is an “end anchor” *question*. Please choose “1” for “Supports very well”, choose “5” for “Doesn't support at all”, and choose 2, 3, or 4 for something in between.]

(T-34 through T-38) The County could decide to raise taxes to avoid an additional \$100 million in General Fund core service level cuts in 2010 and 2011. *Please indicate the extent to which you would support or oppose each of the following tax increases:*

Definitely support 1 2 3 4 5 Definitely oppose

(T-34) Property taxes

(34) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

(T-35) Sales taxes

(35) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

(T-36) Utility taxes on residents of "unincorporated" areas

(36) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

(T-37) Business & Occupation taxes on firms in "unincorporated" areas

(37) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

(T-38) Other (specify in ANSWER COLUMN).

(38) 1 2 3 4 5

(T-39) King County Sheriff Sue Rahr commented in the video that King County employees receive excellent health insurance benefits. Budget Director Bob Cowan stated that King County's overall employee compensation (including wages, health insurance benefits, and other benefits) is comparable to other comparably sized public employers in the Puget Sound region and on the West coast. When the County is faced with a large budget deficit, the County can choose to address the situation in part by reducing its labor costs. The County's labor costs can be reduced in a variety of ways including layoffs, unpaid "furlough days," lower wages, or lower benefits. In fact, the County used one of these choices (unpaid "furlough days") to help balance the 2009 budget. *ASSUMING that the County's elected leaders decided in the future that it was again necessary to reduce the County's labor costs to help balance a future budget, please indicate which ONE of the following choices you feel would be the best way to do that. Each option will likely reduce services.*

(39) 1 2 3 4 5
Abstain Object

1. Lay off employees
2. Implement unpaid "furlough days" for employees
3. Reduce wages
4. Reduce health insurance or other employee benefits
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

Citizen Priorities for County Government: Budget & Strategic Options

Answer Column

(T-40) *Other than your participation in the Countywide Community Forums, have you used any of the following mechanisms to provide King County with feedback about your priorities for the budget?* If you used only one of the mechanisms below, please circle it. If you used a different mechanism, including participating in statistical surveys or focus groups organized in 2007 by the county Council, or if you used more than one mechanism, please circle "other" and list each mechanism you used in the answer column. Please "abstain" if you haven't used any of the following mechanisms.

(40) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

1. Writing, calling or emailing King County elected officials (e.g. Councilmembers, the Executive, the Sheriff, the Prosecutor, etc.).
 2. Participating in an official King County public hearing, town hall meeting, or similar public forum.
 3. Writing a letter to the editor of a local newspaper.
 4. Working with an alliance of service providers or advocacy group (e.g., The King County Alliance for Human Services).
 5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).
- Abstain Object

PROCESS QUESTIONS

Please help choose future topics for the *Countywide Community Forums*, and help evaluate and improve the process you have just experienced, by answering the following process questions.

(P-1) What topic would you like to discuss in future *Countywide Community Forums*?

1. A specific transportation proposal, such as how best to replace the SR-520 ("Evergreen Point") bridge, how best to improve Metro Transit bus service or something else (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).
2. Environmental protection in King County
3. Tax Reform in King County
4. Public Safety and the Justice System in King County
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(1) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(P-2) Have you ever testified at a King County public hearing or Town Hall meeting?

1. Yes
2. No

Abstain Object

(2) 1 2

Abstain Object

(P-3) Did you participate in Round #1 of the *Countywide Community Forums* on the topic of Transportation in June/July 2008?

1. Yes.
2. No. I only recently found out about the forums.
3. No. I knew about the forums, but was not interested in the topic.
4. No. I wanted to attend, but was not able to.
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(3) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(P-4) Did participating in the discussion today with fellow citizen councilors make a difference on how you view the issue?

(4) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

1. Yes. Talking about the issue at today's forum helped me see other perspectives, and I responded differently than I would have before this meeting on some questions because of the new perspective I now have.
2. Yes. Talking about the issue at today's forum helped me see other perspectives but did not change how I responded on any of the questions.
3. No. I really did not learn anything new on the issue at today's forum because everyone agreed on all of the issues.
4. No. I really did not learn anything new on the issue at today's forum because I disagreed with the view of the other citizen councilors.
5. No. I really did not learn anything new on the issue from today's forum because we never really talked about the issues.

Abstain Object

(P-5) How do you rate the information presented in the 20-minute "**Budget & Strategic Options**" video?

(5) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair or average
4. Poor
5. Very poor

Abstain Object

(P-6) In general, do you think the 20-minute "Budget & Strategic Options" video was **fair and even handed**?

(6) 1 2 3 4

Abstain Object

1. Very fair and even handed
2. Somewhat fair and even handed
3. Somewhat biased
4. Very biased

Abstain Object

(P-7) How well did the questions in this Opinionnaire® address the topic of "Budget & Strategic Options in King County"?

1. All major issues were covered
2. Most major issues were covered
3. Most major issues were not covered
4. None of the major issues were covered
5. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(7) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

(P-8) Did you think the length of this Opinionnaire® has been:

1. About right
2. Too long (you want fewer questions next time).
3. Too short (you want more questions next time).
4. Other (please specify in the ANSWER COLUMN).

Abstain Object

(8) 1 2 3 4

Abstain Object

(P-9) How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement, "Overall, I believe the Countywide Community Forums are on the right track."

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Abstain Object

(9) 1 2 3 4 5

Abstain Object

IF YOU THINK ANY MAJOR ISSUES WERE MISSED, OR IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THE ANSWER COLUMN.

**You can also email your comments and suggestions to
CommunityForums@KingCounty.gov**

You can also leave us voicemail at 206/296-1633.

**Please invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join you!
www.CommunityForums.org**

**We appreciate your participation in these
Countywide Community Forums of King County.**

Your Citizen Councilor Network and its Countywide Community Forums are funded completely by tax-deductible donations from public-spirited individuals, businesses, and foundations. Please recommend us!

And please consider making a personal donation now, of any amount, using the envelope available from your host.

THANK YOU!